P

Career Planner

Choosing an Occupation

Alberta
HUMAN RESOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT

the people & workplace department

This easy-to-read booklet is written for youth and adults. It will help you plan your career by increasing your learning and work exploration, and by improving your ability to make life and work decisions. It will help you:

- see that career planning is an on-going process with a series of choices and decisions
- identify and discover how *your* skills, interests, values and traits relate to work roles
- research the tasks, knowledge and attitudes needed in work categories
- develop action plans and problem solving strategies in step with *your* preferred future
- connect with further information and resources.

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Catalogue Item #462101

This information was accurate, to the best of our knowledge, at the time of printing. Labour market information and educational programs are subject to change, and readers are encouraged to confirm with additional sources of information when making career, education and employment decisions.

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Related Topics: Where you can go for more information

The Planning Series consists of three books – *Career Planner*, *Education and Training Planner* and *Adult Back to School Planner*. These easy-to-read books all contain information, exercises and resources to help you make career and training decisions.

The Table of Contents lists the topics covered in this planner. Are you interested in getting information on other topics related to planning your career, or going back to school, or education and training? Then, get a copy of the publications listed on the right or visit the websites. For ordering information, see Resources at the end of this book.

Topic	Resources
Career choices	• *Career Planner* • **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/occinfo**
Work place research	• *Finding Out: How to get the information you need to make the choices you want*
Education and training choices	• *Education and Training Planner* • *It's About Time: To Choose A Post-secondary Education Program* • **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/edinfo**
Going back to school	• *Adult Back To School Planner* • *Education and Training Planner*
Budgeting for school	• *Education and Training Planner* • *Money 101: Budgeting Basics for Further Education* • *Study Your Options* series • **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/studentsfinance** • **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/scholarships**
Job search	• *Job Seeker's Handbook*

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Planning for Career Change

Some experts say that we can expect to change our occupations at least five times in our lifetime. This means that more likely than not, you too will find yourself making changes in the way you work and live. But if you have a plan, you may find change easier to deal with. A plan helps you see how far you've come and where you still need to go. A plan helps you set goals and track them.

Is this book right for you? Take a look at these statements. How many of them do you agree with? If you agree with one or more, you'll want to read through this planner.

This book is for you if...

- you would like to learn more about how to plan a career
- you haven't done a lot or any career planning
- you are not sure what occupations are out there
- you would like to find an occupation to pursue
- you are eager to find out more about the world of work.

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What you'll find here

This planner is intended to help guide you in a career direction and help you choose an occupation. Here, you will find easy to follow, step-by-step directions on how to make decisions about your life and your work. You will look at choices and learn more about the occupations that are available in today's world of work. You will do research and collect information. You will talk to people. You will learn many of the things that are necessary for moving in a new career direction.

Maybe you haven't done much career planning. Or you don't even know what it is. Don't worry. We'll give you lots of help. If the information isn't in this book, we'll tell you where you can get it. By the time you finish this planner, you will have learned a lot about yourself. And with some hard work, effort, and enthusiasm, you'll have a good idea of what occupation you want to go after.

By the time you reach the end of this book, we hope that you will have made a decision about your career. Don't worry about making the "right" or "wrong" decision. Your choice may be right for now. But, things may change. New career opportunities present themselves. Life in general changes. People make choices all the time and respond to what is going on around them. The point is to be flexible and have the tools to help you make decisions throughout your life.

How to use this planner

This planner should be used as a workbook. You will be doing exercises and writing down information about yourself. Each exercise is intended to get you a step closer to making a decision about your career. We have listed resources that you can use if you feel stuck or want to talk to someone. We have also shown examples of how other people have worked to change direction in their lives.

As you work through this planner, you may not want to do the steps in exactly the same order as we've shown. That's okay. You can go back and do them later. But you will probably find it easier to do your career planning if you cover all the steps.

If, at any point, you want to talk to someone, contact a career counsellor. See the Resources section for more information.

Career Planning: Be aware and alert

Many of us already make decisions that are in fact "career decisions." We choose where we live and work. We decide what we're going to do for fun. We get to know certain people. Career planning involves being more conscious and deliberate about our decisions. It also means being alert to opportunities and aware of choices.

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Five Steps to a New Career Path

What is a career?

A career is the total of our work activities – at home, at work, at school and in our communities. A career includes the time we spend at our paid jobs. It includes taking care of a home and looking after children or the elderly. It includes volunteering at the school, coaching a team or helping out at the band office. A career also includes the time we spend learning new things.

Even if you don't think you have a career, you do! And you don't have to be in certain occupations to have a career. Anyone who has spent time working at anything has a career.

What is an occupation?

An occupation is a group of similar jobs for which people usually have to develop skills and knowledge. An occupation is a specific category of work. A person can have several different jobs within an occupation. They can adapt their knowledge and skills to a variety of positions. Examples of occupations include: electrician, engineer and teacher.

What is a job?

A job is the position a person holds, doing specific duties. For example, an occupation is food and beverage server. The job is serving at the Moosehead Restaurant. People usually change jobs more often than they change occupations.

By the time you finish this planner, you will know much more about occupations. In fact, you will have made some decisions about what occupation interests you the most.

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EXERCISE

Think about your own "career"

What kinds of *jobs* have you worked in?

_____

_____

_____

_____

In your lifetime, how many times have you changed your *job*?

_____

_____

What kinds of *occupations* have you worked in?

_____

_____

_____

_____

In your lifetime, how many times have you changed your *occupation*?

_____

_____

We're going to show you how to use five steps to make decisions about your career. But, this will not be the first time - or the last - that you will be making decisions and choices. Once you have learned how to use the five step model, you can follow these steps over and over again to make other decisions in your life.

We make decisions constantly. Some decisions can be quite small and take only a moment to make - like what kind of cereal to eat for breakfast. Other decisions can be very important and take days, weeks or even months to make - like where to live. But, we go though similar steps for both. We stop and think. We get more information. We look at the options. We make a choice. We take action.

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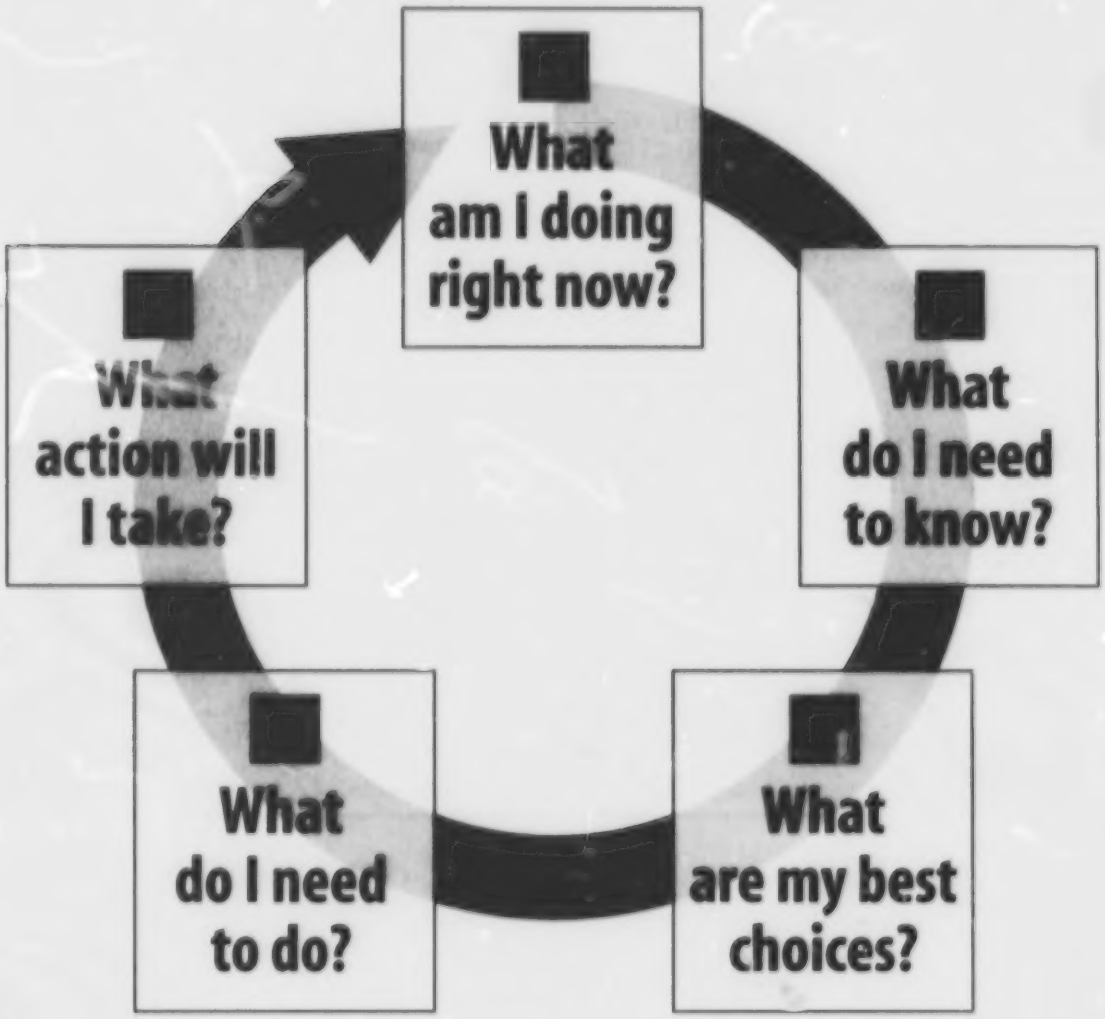
As we go through the five steps, you will answer five main questions. Later, you'll also be answering a number of other questions. But for now, these are the five main things you'll want to think about.



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What am I doing right now?

When something happens and changes your life in some way, try to stop and think. Step back a bit and look at your situation.

What do I need to know?

Find out about the options that are open to you. Think about your needs, your wants and your abilities.

What are my best choices?

Go over each possibility and think about it. Choose the option that is best for you.

What do I need to do?

Plan how you will carry out your decision.

What action will I take?

Make up your mind, then do it.

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Joe's story

I think it was turning 30 that did it for me. All of the sudden, I was really questioning myself. I woke up the morning of my birthday and realized that I had been working for the same company for 12 years. Sure, the people in the shipping and receiving department were really great. And they paid me okay. But, what happened to my big plans to work with computers? Did I want to spend the next 12 years doing the same thing and *never* pursue my dream?

My answer was a big "no."

At first, the idea of changing my career direction was pretty scary. I didn't even know how to get started. So, I talked to a good friend about it. He told me about some workshops they have at the local Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) service centre. I went to one and learned about career planning. They also talked about career options. It's amazing what's actually out there!

I also learned about *myself*. I rediscovered my dream of working with computers. I used computers a little at work, but the place I spent a lot of time on them was at home. I had gotten quite good at learning new software and solving problems. I loved surfing the Net and playing games. I even helped my friends and family with their computers. I'd always enjoyed all of that but it had been a long time since I'd thought about it as a possible "career."

After doing some research and talking to people, I realized that I needed more training to get certified as a computer-networking specialist. I found a program where I could get the training in only two years. My family was very supportive. We worked out our finances and talked about how everything was going to work while I was in school.

I enrolled in the program and graduated near the top of my class. It wasn't all easy. But, I'm now working at a company with a bunch of other "techies." What I like most now is there's always something new to learn. In this area, you can go in all sorts of directions.

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How Joe used the five steps in career planning to make his decision.

Let's look at how Joe moved in a new career direction. When he realized that he wanted a change, what did he do? How did he make his choice? Joe was able to turn something confusing into something exciting by asking himself five key questions.

What am I doing right now?

In the beginning, Joe was afraid of changing his career direction. He wanted something he found interesting and challenging but he didn't know how to get started. Joe also felt like he was taking a big risk in leaving a job he had been in since he left high school. Joe needed to feel comfortable about making a career change.

What do I need to know?

Joe talked to a good friend about his confusion. His friend told him about a career planning workshop in his community. Joe took a close look at his skills, interests, likes and dislikes. Then he considered his career options and learned how to make a plan.

What are my best choices?

Joe knew there was more than one way to work with computers. He looked at several options and figured out what would work best for him. Joe chose something that he liked and that had good prospects for the future.

What do I need to do?

Joe needed to go back to school. He did his research and talked to people. He discussed going back to school with his family and made a plan.

What action will I take?

Joe enrolled in the program and finished near the top of his class. He is now doing work he enjoys and that can also lead to other opportunities.

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Now, let's look at Felee's story.
Can you see how she uses the five career planning steps?

Felee's story

Before Felee came to Canada with her husband, she worked as a stylist in a hair salon. She really enjoyed working with her hands and meeting the new people who came into the shop every day. She liked to try new styles and learn about the latest cutting techniques. Her customers were very happy with her work and came back to see her regularly.

Felee's husband had a good job here so she spent several years at home with her children. When her youngest daughter started school, Felee thought it would be a good idea to go back to work. But, it had been awhile since she had worked outside her home. Felee wasn't sure if she still wanted to be a hairstylist. Maybe there was some other way she could use her skills. Felee had lots of friends in her community and asked them for advice. One suggested that she go to an Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) service centre and even offered to go along.

With help from a career counsellor, Felee learned about the other kinds of work she could do. She could still probably get a job as a hairstylist. But, with her experience and skills, she could also move in a slightly different direction. If she took some training, she could become any number of things - an esthetician, a cosmetician or a makeup artist. Felee had always wanted to learn how to do facials and manicures so she decided to become an esthetician.

Felee also looked at some of the schools that offered courses. She chose a private school and was finished her program within a few months.

Felee has started to offer esthetics services in her own home. As part of her plan, she checked the rules for having a small business in her home and made sure that she had all the right paper work. Felee doesn't make tons of money but she likes being her own boss. Running her own business and having flexible hours also allows her to spend time with her family. She is slowly purchasing equipment and already has a small group of loyal customers. When her children are older, she wants to expand her business and maybe even open her own shop some day.

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EXERCISE

Felee's five steps: Fill in the blanks

Let's look at Felee's career planning. When she wanted to go back to work, after her youngest child was in school, what did Felee do? How did she make her choice? Fill in the steps for Felee.

When you're finished, turn to the next page to see how you did. Don't worry about getting it exactly right. The point is to see how the five steps of decision-making work.

Step one: What am I doing right now?

Step two: What do I need to know?

Step three: What are my best choices?

Step four: What do I need to do?

Step five: What action will I take?

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How Felee used the five steps in career planning to make her decision.

Let's look at how Felee moved in a new career direction. When she decided to go back to work outside her home, what did she do? How did she make her choice? Felee was able to build on her previous experience and skills by asking herself five key questions.

What am I doing right now?

At first, Felee wasn't sure where to turn. She knew it was time to go back to work but wasn't sure that she wanted to do what she did before.

What do I need to know?

Felee talked to someone in her community. Like Joe, a friend told her about the help she could get at the local AHRE service centre. Felee talked to a career counsellor and learned what other options were available to someone with her skills, interests and experience.

What are my best choices?

Felee knew there was more than one option for someone with her training and experience. She looked at some occupational options and figured out what would work best for her. She chose something that she had always wanted to do. She wasn't worried about making a lot of money as long as she was happy and still had time for her family.

What do I need to do?

Felee knew she had to go back to school. She thought about what program would be best for her.

What action will I take?

Felee enrolled in the program and was finished in a few months. She is now in an occupation that she likes and gives her the freedom to look after other things in her life.

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Planning for Change

Once you have a plan, use it to help you stay on track. Continue to focus on your goals and measure your progress. But stay alert to new possibilities. When you're busy planning for one thing, something better may come along.

Think about your own experiences. How many times has something good happened that you didn't expect? Chances are you did something - you made a choice - even a small one - that made it happen. You were open to the possibility of a good thing. It's the same with planning your career. As you begin your career planning, keep your mind open to unexpected opportunities. Consider taking a risk. You never know what is around the corner!

As we look for answers, we can ask for information and advice from many experienced people: career counsellors, workers and employers, friends and relatives, teachers, and others.

Now You Try It!

You've read about how Joe and Felee made decisions about their careers. They each went through five steps to help them figure out where they were, where they were going and what they needed to get there.

You can do the same thing! In the next chapters, you'll learn to use the five steps of career planning to help you choose an occupation. The five steps are really questions that you must answer in order to get the information you need to make a decision. There's a little more on top of that. For each question - or step - there are still other questions. Going through all of these steps and answering all the questions – big and small – will help you successfully plan your career.

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STEP ONE: What am I Doing Right Now?

In order to answer this question for step one, you'll also want to ask yourself some other questions.

- What have I done before?
- What do I like to do?
- What don't I like to do?
- What do I want to do?

On the following pages, you'll find exercises to help you find answers to these questions. Go through these questions just like Joe and Felee did. Think about the past, present and future. When you've answered these questions, you will have taken a good look at your life.

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EXERCISE

My story - What am I doing right now?

What has made me stop and look at my life?
(Think about what is happening now.)

What have I done before?
(Think over your past. Write a short story about your life.)

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What do I like to do?
(Think of the things that you like to do best. What activities make you happy or satisfied?)

What don't I like to do?
(You'll probably spend a lot of time working. It's a good idea to avoid something you really don't like.)

What do I want to do?

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Dream a little

Nearly everyone dreams about the "perfect job." Or they have ideas about what they want to do with their lives. If you have ever had dreams about what you want to do, you are not alone. Joe and Felee also had dreams about what they wanted to do. When they were clear about what they wanted in their careers, they made plans to work toward their dreams.

For a number of years, Joe forgot his earlier dream of working with computers for a living. But, with some help, he was able to rediscover what career he really wanted to pursue. He made a plan, took some training and is now working in an area that he finds interesting and has a positive future.

Although she had worked as a hairstylist, Felee had always liked the idea of doing facials and manicures. She loved working with her hands and talking to the customers who came into the shop in her homeland. Now she is running her own esthetics business in her home and is still able to spend time with her family.

Dreams help us find out what we want to do.

What are your dreams? Have you ever thought you would like to become a painter or a paramedic? What about being an electrician or bookkeeper or teacher? Maybe you've wanted to run heavy equipment, build houses or make furniture for a living. What would you like to be doing in the future?

Sit down in your favourite place. Make sure there are no distractions. Get comfortable. Close your eyes and relax. Begin to imagine and dream.

If you could have your dream job, anywhere in the world, what would it be? Don't worry about money or school or anything else. Just let your imagination wander.

In your dream, what do you see around you? What does it feel like? Are you working with people or things? Are you working with many people or just a few? Are you alone? Are you the boss? Are you making a lot of money? Do you enjoy the work so much that money doesn't matter?

When you finish your dreaming, write your dream down. Do it now while you still remember. Take as much time as you need. Dreams alone will not change your life. But, turning your dreams into goals and working towards them will.

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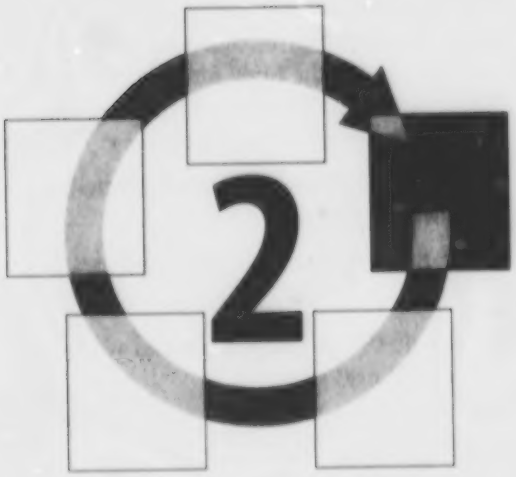
STEP TWO: What do I Need to Know?



In step one, you discovered why you are doing career planning. You answered the question, "What am I doing now?" You also uncovered some of your dreams. Now, you will move another step closer to choosing an occupation that might suit you.

In this second step of career planning, you will find out about yourself and your abilities. And then you will find out about opportunities in the world of work. In order to answer the question for step two, you'll want to ask yourself some other questions.

- What kinds of things am I good at?
- What types of occupations are out there for me?

It may seem like some "expert" will give you all the answers about the occupation you belong in. NOT true!

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As we saw with Joe and Felee, there are different ways to reach a new career choice. Joe's interest grew out of his earlier dream about working with computers and the activities he did in his spare time. Felee's occupation grew out of the hairstyling she did before she came to Canada.

Many kinds of "Smart"

Research is now showing that there are many kinds of "smart." We all have our own talents and abilities. For example, some of us can see the order in things. We just seem to know where things belong. Others can learn languages easily or are good with their hands. Maybe you are a gifted musician or excel in sports. Perhaps your friend is good at seeing the structure in things and can easily build things. Or you know people who are great at dealing with others. They seem to "read" people really well.

As you work to choose an occupation, try to think about what your own gifts are. Nurture them. Celebrate them. When you're feeling unsure of yourself, remember your gifts. Look for occupations that use your gifts.

What kinds of things am I good at?

When you choose a career path, it's important to have a full and clear picture of yourself. You know yourself best. Only you know what you really believe in, what you can do, what you enjoy doing. You understand yourself. You also know about your work likes and dislikes.

You may have the problem that most of this information is jumbled around in your head. It may feel disorganized and disconnected. Don't worry. It's the same for a lot of people. When you are at this stage of planning your career path, you have two challenges:

- To get the information about yourself down on paper.
- To organize the information in a useful way.

You will do this as you read on and work through the next exercises.

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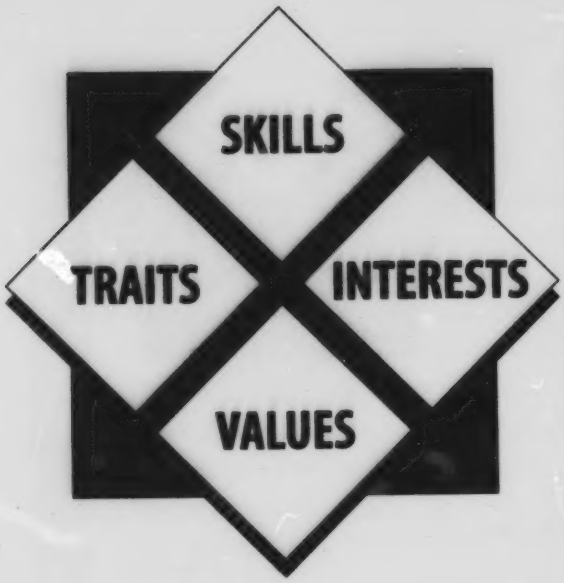

Skills, Interests, Values and Traits

You can make a career choice based on any of your skills, interests, values and traits. These things are a big part of who you are.

Skills are things that you have learned to do. Examples include:

- driving
- keyboarding
- cooking

Interests are things that you like. Examples include:

- sports
- music
- talking to people

Values are things that are important to you. Examples include:

- being happy
- helping others
- being independent

Traits are things that you are. Examples include:

- energetic
- shy
- easy-going

Where do we get these interests, skills, values and traits? Well, we get some in school. We get some from our families. But, many, many more just develop as we live our lives day to day.

The following activities will help you discover your own skills, interests, values and traits. These are not tests. There is no wrong answer. Nobody will mark your work. You are the expert!

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What are *my* skills?

Skills are things you have learned to do.
Examples include:

- writing
- welding
- listening
- sewing
- filing
- painting

EXERCISE

My skills

Read each sentence. Does it describe you? Check the square if it does.

	Yes	Sometimes	No
I can speak two languages	☐	☐	☐
I can cook	☐	☐	☐
I can sew	☐	☐	☐
I can add numbers	☐	☐	☐
I can follow plans or patterns	☐	☐	☐
I can follow directions when someone tells me what to do	☐	☐	☐
I can use a tape measure	☐	☐	☐
I can give clear directions to someone	☐	☐	☐
I can get other people to do what I want them to do	☐	☐	☐
I can make good decisions	☐	☐	☐
I can start something on my own before the boss tells me what to do	☐	☐	☐
I can lead a group	☐	☐	☐
I can make a budget	☐	☐	☐
I can remember details	☐	☐	☐
I can help other people with their problems	☐	☐	☐
I can work as part of a team	☐	☐	☐
I can stay calm in an emergency	☐	☐	☐
I can do the same thing again and again and not get bored	☐	☐	☐
I can lift heavy objects	☐	☐	☐
I can sell things	☐	☐	☐
I can organize people	☐	☐	☐
I can plan a party	☐	☐	☐
I can entertain people	☐	☐	☐
I can clean	☐	☐	☐
I can grow plants	☐	☐	☐

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	Yes	Sometimes	No
I can do tax forms	☐	☐	☐
I can build a fence	☐	☐	☐
I can build furniture	☐	☐	☐
I can style hair	☐	☐	☐
I can fix car engines	☐	☐	☐
I can fix small appliances	☐	☐	☐
I can install computer software	☐	☐	☐
I can care for small children	☐	☐	☐
I can keyboard	☐	☐	☐
I can help people who are upset	☐	☐	☐
I can use a computer	☐	☐	☐
I can speak to a group of people	☐	☐	☐
I can paint a picture	☐	☐	☐
I can play a sport	☐	☐	☐
I can tell a story	☐	☐	☐
I can make a room look nice	☐	☐	☐

Other things I can do:

	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐

Now go back over the whole list. Pick out the five things that you do best and write them down.

My main skills are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

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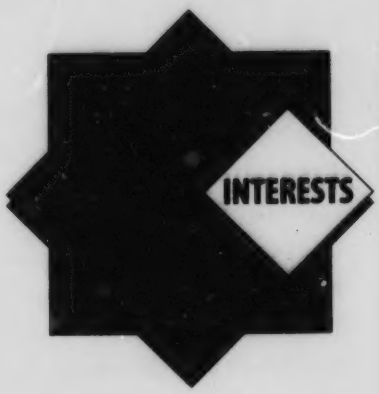
What are *my* interests?

Interests are the things you like. This is an easy question to answer. You know what music you like to listen to, what food you like to eat, and what games you like to play. You may also know what you like about work. Examples of interests include:

- hiking
- gardening
- golfing
- collecting
- fishing



EXERCISE

My interests

Read each sentence. Does it describe you? Check the square if it does.

	Yes	Sometimes	No
I like to be active	☐	☐	☐
I like to listen to music	☐	☐	☐
I like to drive	☐	☐	☐
I like to fix things	☐	☐	☐
I like to draw pictures	☐	☐	☐
I like to work with plants	☐	☐	☐
I like to work with animals	☐	☐	☐
I like to do things with my hands	☐	☐	☐
I like to shop	☐	☐	☐
I like to do housework	☐	☐	☐
I like to go to the theatre	☐	☐	☐
I like to play sports	☐	☐	☐
I like to garden	☐	☐	☐
I like to walk	☐	☐	☐
I like to watch nature programs on TV	☐	☐	☐
I like to coach sports	☐	☐	☐
I like to talk on the telephone	☐	☐	☐
I like to learn about the environment	☐	☐	☐
I like to handle money	☐	☐	☐
I like to use small hand tools	☐	☐	☐
I like to operate machines and equipment	☐	☐	☐
I like to cook	☐	☐	☐
I like to sew	☐	☐	☐
I like to style hair	☐	☐	☐

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	Yes	Sometimes	No
I like to keyboard	☐	☐	☐
I like to use the computer	☐	☐	☐
I like to go on the Internet	☐	☐	☐
I like to arrange flowers	☐	☐	☐
I like to paint houses	☐	☐	☐
I like photography	☐	☐	☐
I like to make things from different materials (For example: crafts, sculpting, woodworking)	☐	☐	☐
I like to act, sing or dance	☐	☐	☐
I like to play a musical instrument	☐	☐	☐
I like to make people laugh	☐	☐	☐
I like to teach adults	☐	☐	☐
I like to teach children	☐	☐	☐
I like to help people with their problems	☐	☐	☐
I like to serve people	☐	☐	☐
I like to sell things	☐	☐	☐
I like to be the boss	☐	☐	☐
I like bookkeeping	☐	☐	☐
I like to work with numbers	☐	☐	☐

Other things that I like:

	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐

Now go back over the whole list. Pick out the five things that you like best and write them down.

My main interests are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

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What are *my* values?

Things that are important to you are called values. Joe valued helping other people solve computer problems. Felee valued making customers happy.

Values are very personal. They belong to you and nobody else. You may have picked some of them up from people close to you but you, alone, know what is most important to you. Examples include:

- being part of the community
- being secure
- making the world a better place

- being healthy
- having friends
- making money

EXERCISE

My values

Read each sentence. Does it describe you? Check the square if it does. I think that...

	Yes	Sometimes	No
It's important to have good health	☐	☐	☐
It's important to learn new things	☐	☐	☐
It's important to grow personally	☐	☐	☐
It's important to have time and energy for my life away from work	☐	☐	☐
It's important to meet new people	☐	☐	☐
It's important to have a lot of friends	☐	☐	☐
It's important to have a steady job	☐	☐	☐
It's important to have a boss who is fair	☐	☐	☐
It's important to have a boss who is easy to get along with	☐	☐	☐
It's important to work in a comfortable place	☐	☐	☐
It's important to work in a safe place	☐	☐	☐
It's important to work with people I like	☐	☐	☐
It's important to know exactly what to do	☐	☐	☐
It's important to make the world a better place	☐	☐	☐
It's important to do something that I feel is important	☐	☐	☐
It's important to make a lot of money	☐	☐	☐
It's important to see the results of my work	☐	☐	☐
It's important to have an important work title	☐	☐	☐
It's important to have good family relationships	☐	☐	☐
It's important to be responsible for other workers	☐	☐	☐
It's important to protect the environment	☐	☐	☐

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	Yes	Sometimes	No
It's important to grow spiritually	☐	☐	☐
It's important to do physical work	☐	☐	☐
It's important to have a chance for movement (related job and more pay)	☐	☐	☐
It's important to make the world more beautiful	☐	☐	☐
It's important to finish a difficult task	☐	☐	☐
It's important to do a job well	☐	☐	☐
It's important to make decisions together with other people	☐	☐	☐
It's important to be my own boss	☐	☐	☐
It's important to be creative: to come up with new things or new ideas	☐	☐	☐
It's important to set my own hours of work	☐	☐	☐
It's important to plan my work	☐	☐	☐
It's important to control the order in which my work is done	☐	☐	☐
It's important to use my brain	☐	☐	☐
It's important to show my best abilities	☐	☐	☐
It's important to have a few close friends	☐	☐	☐
It's important to have interesting work	☐	☐	☐
It's important to have challenging work	☐	☐	☐
It's important to have exciting work	☐	☐	☐
It's important to have easy work	☐	☐	☐

Other things that are important to me:

	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐

Now go back over the whole list. Pick out the five things that are most important to you and write them down.

My main values are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

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What are *my* traits?

Traits are who you are and how you act. They are a big part of your personality. Examples include:

- risk-taking
- physical
- cautious
- outgoing
- organized
- self-confident

By looking at Joe and Felee's stories, we can see some of their traits. Felee was creative. She liked to try out new hairstyles on her customers. She also liked working with other people. One of her favourite things about working as a hairstylist was talking to her customers. Joe doesn't mind taking risks. He went back to school in order to change his career path. Joe likes a challenge and is confident in his abilities to do well.

EXERCISE

My traits

Read each sentence. Does it describe you? Check the square if it does.

	Yes	Sometimes	No
I am organized	☐	☐	☐
I finish tasks that I start	☐	☐	☐
I do many different things	☐	☐	☐
I do the same thing most of the time	☐	☐	☐
I need to see a finished job at the end of the day	☐	☐	☐
When I'm working on something, I'm careful	☐	☐	☐
I put lots of energy into work	☐	☐	☐
I work at a slow pace	☐	☐	☐
I am creative	☐	☐	☐
I am outgoing	☐	☐	☐
I am different from most other people	☐	☐	☐
I want to fit in with other people	☐	☐	☐
I need a lot of time by myself	☐	☐	☐
I think a problem through before I make a decision	☐	☐	☐
I go by my feelings when I make a decision	☐	☐	☐
When I make a decision, I stick to it	☐	☐	☐
I don't mind taking risks	☐	☐	☐
I am ambitious	☐	☐	☐
I am a leader	☐	☐	☐
I do things the way they have always been done	☐	☐	☐

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	Yes	Sometimes	No
I find new ways to do things	☐	☐	☐
I like working by myself	☐	☐	☐
I like working with other people	☐	☐	☐
I live to work. Work is the centre of my life	☐	☐	☐
I work to live. Work is not the centre of my life	☐	☐	☐

Other things that describe who I am and how I act:

	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐

Now go back over the whole list. Pick out the five traits that best describe you and write them down.

My main traits are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

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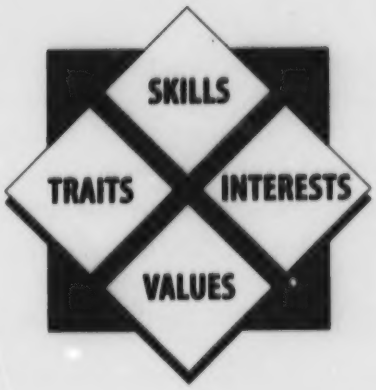
EXERCISE

Summary of your skills, interests, values and traits

To create your summary, list the five main skills, interests, values, and traits that you chose. Make a copy of this summary for easy reference as you complete the next occupational categories exercises.



My main skills are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

My main interests are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

My main values are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

My main traits are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

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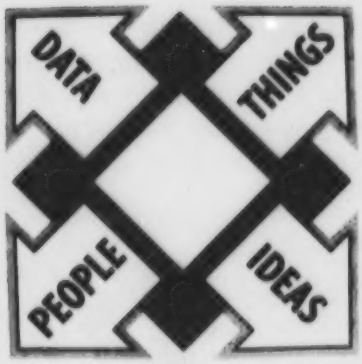
What types of occupations are out there for me?

If you have done all the exercises up until now, you have learned a lot of things about yourself. Now you will learn about the world of work. What kinds of occupations are out there?

People, Things, Ideas, Data or Information groups

Do you know that there are more than 7,000 different kinds of occupations in Canada? That's a lot of choices! But, you don't have to find out about all 7,000 - just the ones that might be right you. Most occupations can be sorted into four groups.

- people
- things
- ideas
- data or information



Using this approach is simple, but the four groups are really too big to help us make an occupational choice. Why? Well, because many occupations can fit into more than one group. As an example, think about two different occupations where people work with things:

- a person who arranges flowers
- a person who drives a truck.

These occupations are quite different from one another. They would appeal to different people. So, we need a more precise way to group the 7,000 occupations.

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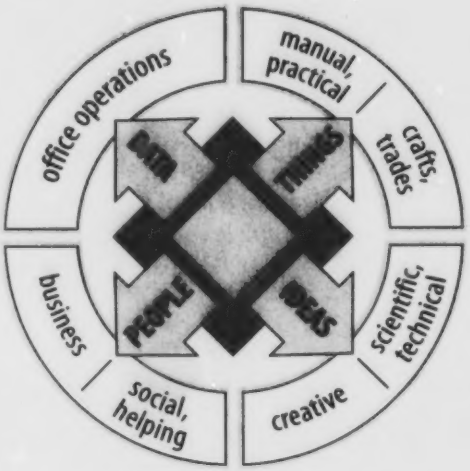
Occupational categories

In order to do this, the four groups are broken into sub-groups, called occupational categories. There are seven occupational categories.

- manual, practical
- crafts, trades
- scientific, technical
- creative
- social, helping
- business
- office operations

As you look at each of these seven categories, you will probably see some that appeal to you more than others.



The following chart illustrates how different kinds of tasks relate to the four groups, and how the four groups relate to the seven occupational categories.

Tasks	Groups	Occupational categories
Doing physical work **Working with your hands** **Working with machines**	**Things**	**Manual, practical** **Crafts, trades**
Working with ideas Expressing ourselves in work	Ideas	Scientific, technical Creative
Helping others **Managing others**	**People**	**Social, helping** **Business**
Working with data Working with details	Data/Information	Office operations

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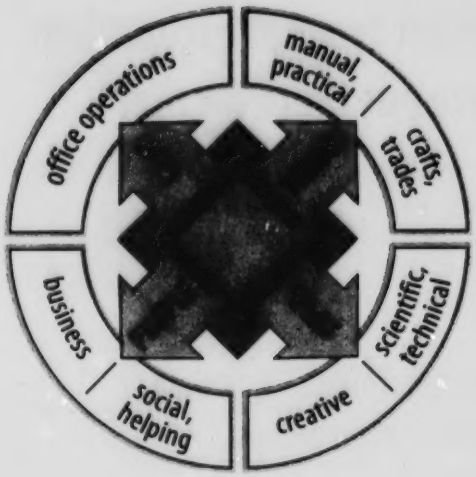

The following chart illustrates how different kinds of tasks relate to the four groups, and how the four groups relate to the seven occupational categories.

Tasks	Groups	Occupational categories
Doing physical work	Things	Manual, practical
Working with your hands Working with machines		Crafts, trades
Working with ideas	Ideas	Scientific, technical
Expressing ourselves in work		Creative
Helping others	People	Social, helping
Managing others		Business
Working with data Working with details	Data/Information	Office operations

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- sports
- farming
- fishing
- labour
- clerical work
- computer data entry
- accounting
- sewing
- carpentry
- house painting
- sales
- travel
- management
- advertising
- mining
- x-ray technology
- drafting
- surveying
- child care
- teaching
- recreation
- social services
- health care
- art
- photography
- stage manager

The diagram shows some sample occupations within each category. This gives you a picture of the world of work. You will notice that as we get more specific about occupations, the circle gets bigger. There are many occupations in each category. But, the people who work in them tend to share similar skills, interests, values and traits.

Don't be surprised if you see some very different occupations grouped together. For example, crafts and trades workers usually deal with "things." And how many "things" are there in this world? Well, everything from bricks to door locks to food. That's why there can be such a variety of occupations in one group. Some will have absolutely nothing to do with the others.

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Fitting your summary to occupations

In the next several pages we are going to talk about the seven occupational categories in more detail. You will see that people who work in certain occupations tend to share similar skills, interests, values and traits. You'll also see that people work in all sorts of industries. By comparing your own skills, interests, values and traits to the occupational categories, you can get closer to discovering what occupation may be most suitable for you. The better the fit between you and your choice, the more likely you are to feel satisfied.

Now, let's look at how your summary ties in with occupational choices. Compare your picture to the picture of each of the seven occupational groups. Which occupational group or groups do you fit into?

Maybe you're not 100 per cent sure that the occupational category you're choosing is "the" right one for you. Still, it's important to choose something as a starting point. You'd be surprised what new opportunities can come along once you get going. You can always look at other categories later.

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1. Manual or Practical category

Work that

- deals mostly with things
- is physically active.

Here are ***some*** of the work settings (industries) and occupations.

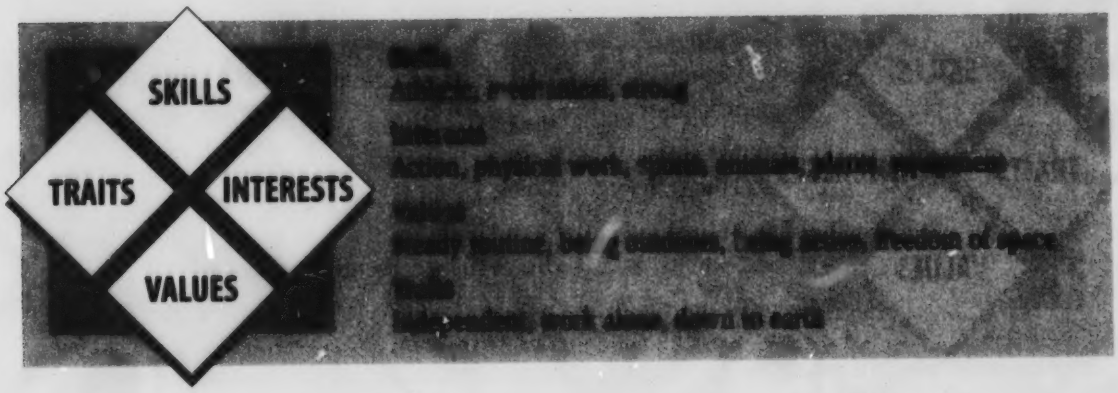
Construction Industry
Labourer, trades helper...

Agriculture and Forest Industries
Farmer, farm or ranch worker, logger...

Sports and Recreation Industries
Grounds keeper, athletic equipment custodian, ice maker...

Hospitality Industry
Dishwasher, housekeeper...

Service Industry
Mail carrier, bus, truck or taxi driver, firefighter, dry cleaner, janitor, animal attendant...



	Yes	Maybe	No
Do you fit into the manual or practical category?	☐	☐	☐
Would you like to be a manual or practical worker?	☐	☐	☐

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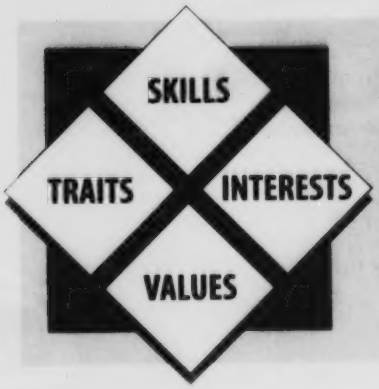
Grounds keeper, athletic equipment custodian, ice maker...

Hospitality Industry
Dishwasher, housekeeper...

Service Industry
Mail carrier, bus, truck or taxi driver, firefighter, dry cleaner, janitor, animal attendant...



Skills
Athletic, mechanical, strong

Interests
Action, physical work, sports, animals, plants, equipment

Values
Steady routine, being outdoors, being active, freedom of space

Traits
Independent, work alone, down to earth

	Yes	Maybe	No
Do you fit into the manual or practical category?			
Would you like to be a manual or practical worker?			

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2. Crafts and Trades category

Work that

- deals mostly with things
- depends on using our hands or operating machinery.

Here are ***some*** of the work settings (industries) and occupations.

Construction Industry
Any worker in the trades: painter, bricklayer, plumber, electrician, cabinetmaker...

Manufacturing
Anyone "on the line" in a factory, shipping and receiving clerk, welder...

Agriculture and Forest Industry
Nursery worker, taxidermist, landscape gardener...

Service Industry
Locksmith, parts technician, automotive service technician, hairstylist, cook, tailor, repairperson for small motors, refrigerators, photocopiers...

Skills
Good with hand tools, good with numbers, good with machines

Interests
Things, fixing, building

Values
Stability, creativity, a challenge, seeing results of work

Traits
Work alone, doing exact work

	Yes	Maybe	No
Do you fit into the crafts and trades category?	☐	☐	☐

	Yes	Maybe	No
Would you like to be a crafts and trades worker?	☐	☐	☐

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3. Scientific and Technical category

Work that

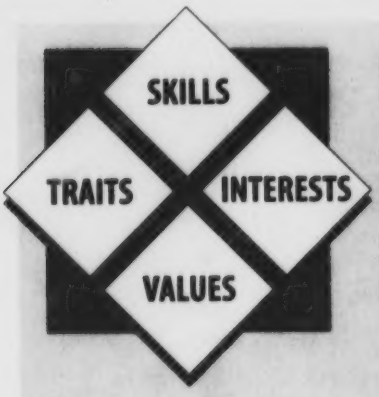
- deals mostly with ideas and imagination
- makes ideas useful.

Here are ***some*** of the work settings (industries) and occupations.

Universities and Research Facilities
Research lab worker, scientist, technician in biology, geology, forestry or astronomy...

Medical Centres
Medical lab technician, animal health technologist, therapist, medical doctor, dentist, veterinarian...

Engineering Companies
Any type of engineer, technician, technologist, surveyor, draftsperson, computer programmer, systems analyst, software engineer...



Skills
Thinking, doing tests and experiments, good with numbers, good research skills

Interests
Science, math, ideas

Values
Order, freedom to make decisions, freedom of time, understanding things

Traits
Independent, creative, curious about how things work

	Yes	Maybe	No
Do you fit into the scientific and technical category?	☐	☐	☐

	Yes	Maybe	No
Would you like to be a scientific and technical worker?	☐	☐	☐

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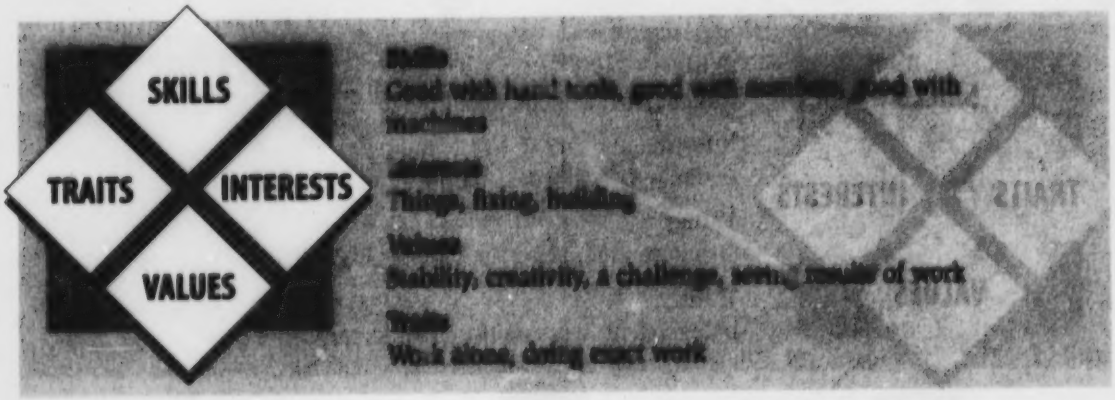
Service Industry
Locksmith, parts technician, automotive service technician, hairstylist, cook, tailor, repairperson for small motors, refrigerators, photocopiers...



	Yes	Maybe	No
Do you fit into the crafts and trades category?	☐	☐	☐
Would you like to be a crafts and trades worker?	☐	☐	☐

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Here are ***some*** of the work settings (industries) and occupations.

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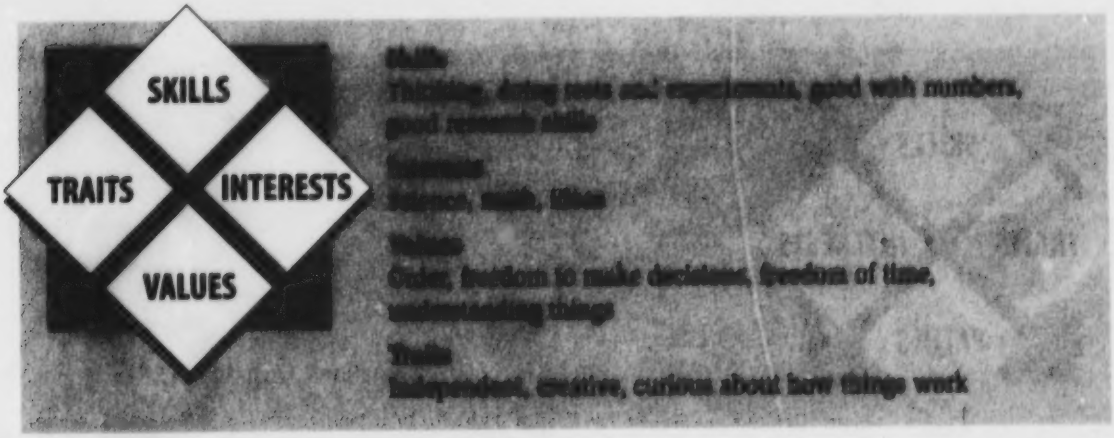
Research lab worker, scientist, technician in biology, geology, forestry or astronomy...

Medical Centres
Medical lab technician, animal health technologist, therapist, medical doctor, dentist, veterinarian...

Engineering Companies
Any type of engineer, technician, technologist, surveyor, draftsperson, computer programmer, systems analyst, software engineer...



	Yes	Maybe	No
Do you fit into the scientific and technical category?	☐	☐	☐

	Yes	Maybe	No
Would you like to be a scientific and technical worker?	☐	☐	☐

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4. Creative category

Work that

- deals mostly with ideas and imagination
- uses ideas and imagination in new ways.

Here are ***some*** of the work settings (industries) and occupations.

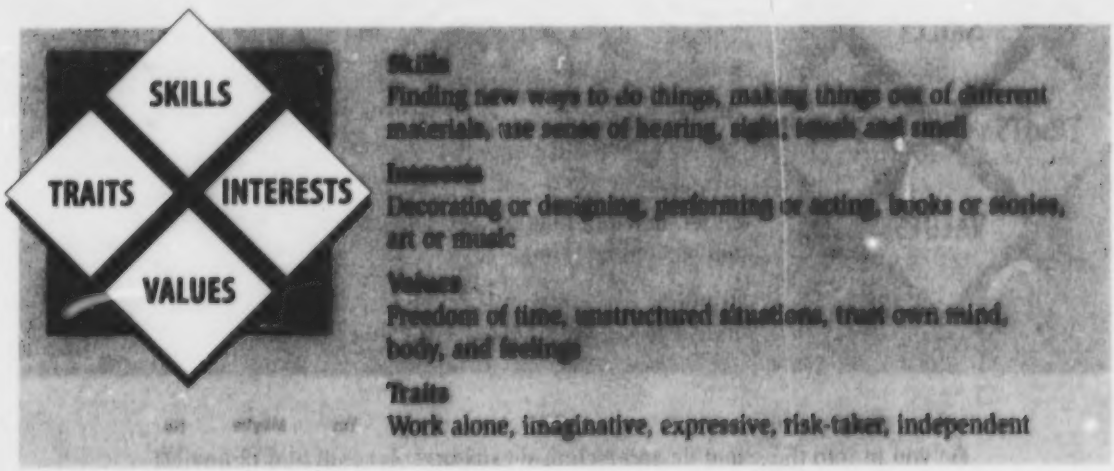
Entertainment Industry
Performing artists: dancer, musician, actor; their assistants: costume designer, make-up artist, set decorator, songwriter; film editor; disk jockey; cartoonist...

Galleries and Museums
Curator, painter, sculptor...

Advertising and Graphic Arts Industries
Illustrator, graphic designer, sign painter, display designer...

Service Industry
Floral arranger, interior decorator...

Publishing Industry
Reporter, creative or technical writer, translator, editor...


SKILLS
TRAITS
INTERESTS
VALUES
Skills
Finding new ways to do things, making things out of different materials, use sense of hearing, sight, touch and smell
Interests
Decorating or designing, performing or acting, books or stories, art or music
Values
Freedom of time, unstructured situations, trust own mind, body, and feelings
Traits
Work alone, imaginative, expressive, risk-taker, independent

	Yes	Maybe	No
Do you fit into the creative category?	☐	☐	☐
Would you like to be a creative worker?	☐	☐	☐

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5. Social or Helping category

Work that

- deals mostly with people
- helps people.

Here are ***some*** of the work settings (industries) and occupations.

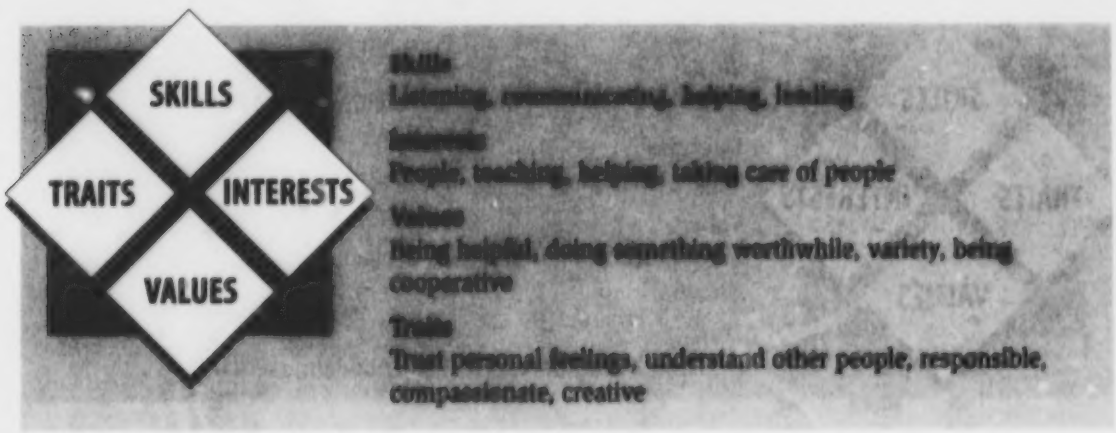
Education Industry
Teacher, teacher's aide, probation officer, counsellor, child welfare worker, community worker...

Social Service Industry
Social worker, probation officer, counsellor, child welfare workers, community worker...

Recreation Industry
Recreation leader, fitness consultant, coach...

Health Care Industry
Nurse, therapist, addictions counsellor, paramedic, orderly, dental assistant...

Service Industry
Police officer, flight attendant, day care worker, hunting or fishing guide...



	Yes	Maybe	No
Do you fit into the social or helping category?	☐	☐	☐
Would you like to be a social or helping worker?	☐	☐	☐

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4. Creative category

Work that

- deals mostly with ideas and imagination
- uses ideas and imagination in new ways.

Here are ***some*** of the work settings (industries) and occupations.

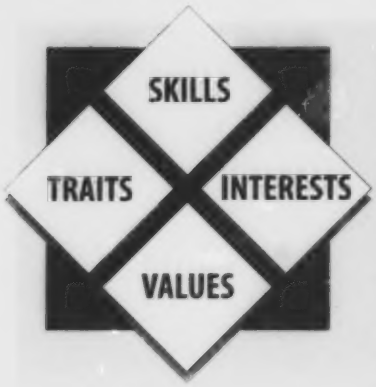
Entertainment Industry
Performing artists: dancer, musician, actor; their assistants: costume designer, make-up artist, set decorator, songwriter; film editor; disk jockey; cartoonist...

Galleries and Museums
Curator, painter, sculptor...

Advertising and Graphic Arts Industries
Illustrator, graphic designer, sign painter, display designer...

Service Industry
Floral arranger, interior decorator...

Publishing Industry
Reporter, creative or technical writer, translator, editor...



Skills
Finding new ways to do things, making things out of different materials, use sense of hearing, sight, touch and smell

Interests
Decorating or designing, performing or acting, books or stories, art or music

Values
Freedom of time, unstructured situations, trust own mind, body, and feelings

Traits
Work alone, imaginative, expressive, risk-taker, independent

	Yes	Maybe	No
Do you fit into the creative category?			
Would you like to be a creative worker?			

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5. Social or Helping category

Work that

- deals mostly with people
- helps people.

Here are ***some*** of the work settings (industries) and occupations.

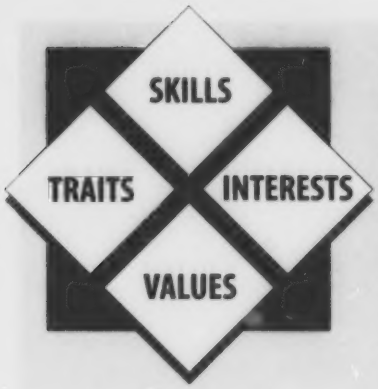
Education Industry
Teacher, teacher's aide, probation officer, counsellor, child welfare worker, community worker...

Social Service Industry
Social worker, probation officer, counsellor, child welfare workers, community worker...

Recreation Industry
Recreation leader, fitness consultant, coach...

Health Care Industry
Nurse, therapist, addictions counsellor, paramedic, orderly, dental assistant...

Service Industry
Police officer, flight attendant, day care worker, hunting or fishing guide...



Skills
Listening, communicating, helping, leading

Interests
People, teaching, helping, taking care of people

Values
Being helpful, doing something worthwhile, variety, being cooperative

Traits
Trust personal feelings, understand other people, responsible, compassionate, creative

	Yes	Maybe	No
Do you fit into the social or helping category?			
Would you like to be a social or helping worker?			

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6. Business category

Work that

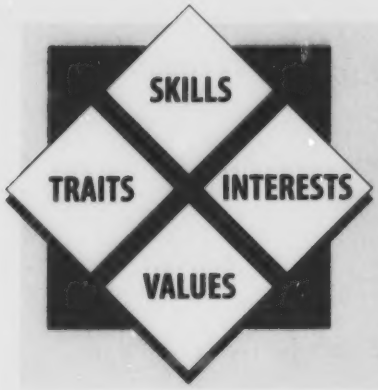
- deals mostly with people
- involves managing or organizing people.

Here are ***some*** of the work settings (industries) and occupations.

Wholesale and Retail Companies
Salesperson, buyer or dealer, public relations person, supervisor, manager, owner or operator...

Promotion Industry
Advertising salesperson, product demonstrator, fundraiser...

Service Industry
Restaurant manager, real estate agent, travel agent, financial planner, insurance salesperson...



Skills
Leading, persuading, motivating, communicating

Interests
People, managing, selling, discussing

Values
Independence, money, power, decision-making, contact with people

Traits
Decisive, "wheeler-dealer", self-confident, risk-taker

	Yes	Maybe	No
Do you fit into the business category?	☐	☐	☐
Would you like to be a business worker?	☐	☐	☐

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7. Office Operations category

Work that

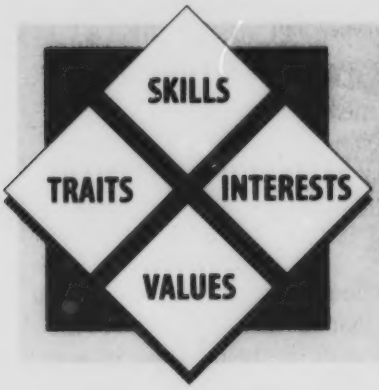
- deals mostly with detailed information and ways to organize it
- uses office equipment.

Here are ***some*** of the work settings (industries) and occupations.

Business Offices
Accounting clerk, computer operator, dispatcher...

Government Offices
Records clerk, administrative support, desktop publishing specialist...

Financial Industry
Loans officer, accountant, insurance claims adjuster, tax return preparer...



Skills
Keeping records, thinking logically, noticing details

Interests
Numbers, words, office equipment, computers

Values
Security, order, neatness

Traits
Precise, stable, organized, finish tasks

	Yes	Maybe	No
Do you fit into the office operations category?	☐	☐	☐
Would you like to be a office operations worker?	☐	☐	☐

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6. Business category

Work that

- deals mostly with people
- involves managing or organizing people.

Here are ***some*** of the work settings (industries) and occupations.

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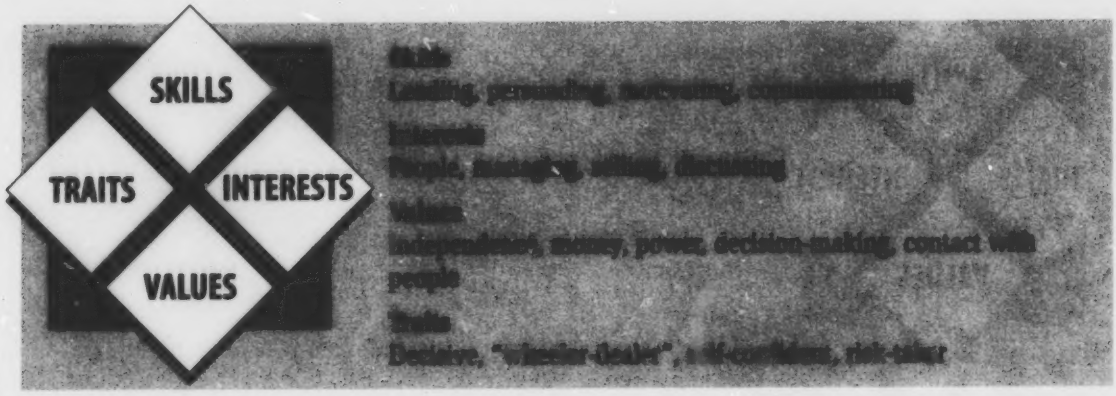
Promotion Industry
Advertising salesperson, product demonstrator, fundraiser...

Service Industry
Restaurant manager, real estate agent, travel agent, financial planner, insurance salesperson...



	Yes	Maybe	No
Do you fit into the business category?	☐	☐	☐
Would you like to be a business worker?	☐	☐	☐

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7. Office Operations category

Work that

- deals mostly with detailed information and ways to organize it
- uses office equipment.

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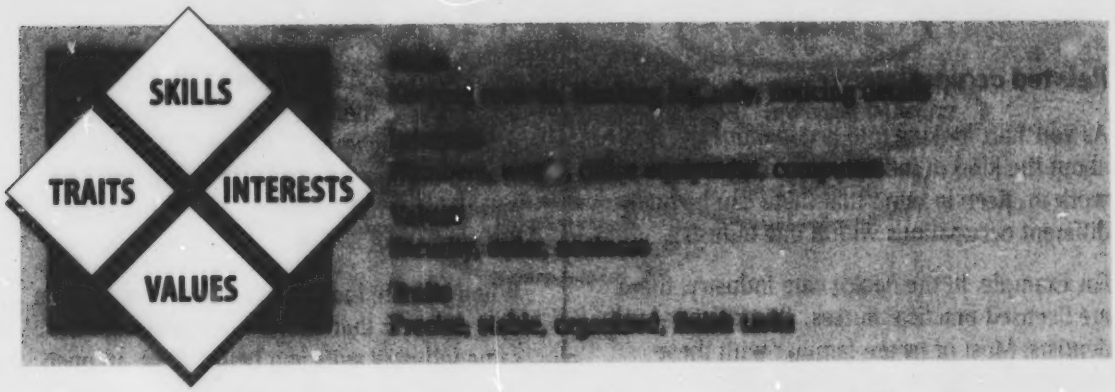
Government Offices
Records clerk, administrative support, desktop publishing specialist...

Financial Industry
Loans officer, accountant, insurance claims adjuster, tax return preparer...



	Yes	Maybe	No
Do you fit into the office operations category?	☐	☐	☐
Would you like to be a office operations worker?	☐	☐	☐

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EXERCISE

My occupational category or categories

Now you have carefully studied the descriptions of each of the seven occupational categories. And you have compared your summary with each category.

Which category, or categories, of occupations would you fit into the best?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

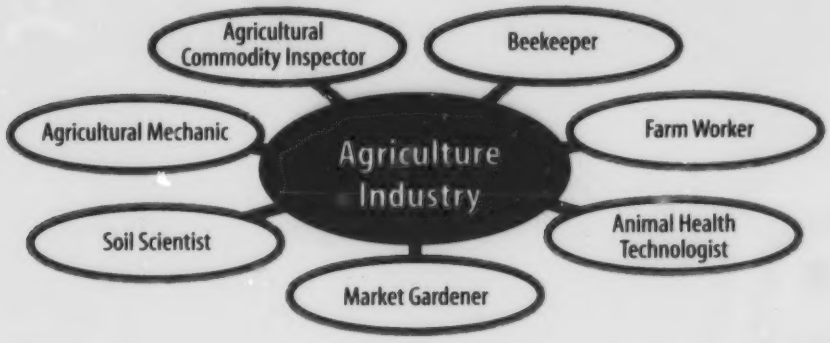
4. _____

Related occupations

As you start looking into occupations, think about the kind of industry you might want to work in. Keep in mind that there can be many different occupations within one industry.

For example, in the health care industry, there are licensed practical nurses, chiropractors and dentists. Most of us are familiar with these occupations. But, there are also many other health-related occupations, such as: athletic therapist, chiropractic assistant, pharmacy technician, food and nutrition management technologist, medical secretary, and health record technician. All of these health care related occupations have their own education and training requirements. The workers do different tasks.

When you are looking at one occupation, you may discover that another occupation in the same industry suits you better. Keep an open mind and you may be pleasantly surprised by the possibilities!



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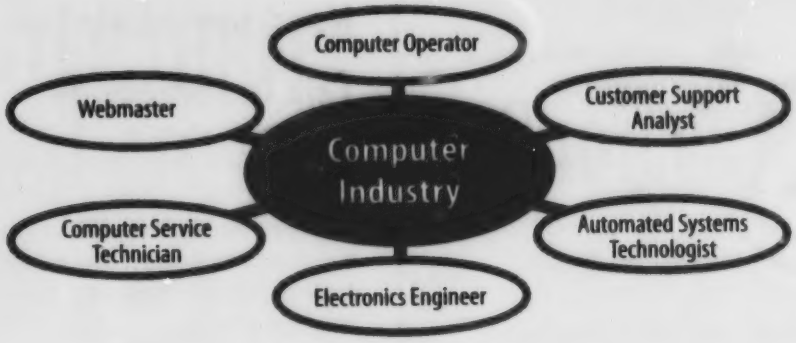

These are just some of the related occupations and industries where people work. For information on others, visit the ALIS website at **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/occinfo** See Resources at the end of the book for more information.

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What if...

My summary of skills, interests, values and traits don't match up exactly with an occupational category?

Just pick the category, or categories, that seem to match up most closely.

I match with more than one occupational category?

That just means that you have more occupations to choose from. Or you could find an occupation in one category, and a hobby or volunteer work in another. You should also know that many types of occupations fit into more than one category.

I don't want to work in this category?

Even if your summary seems to fit a certain occupational category, nobody is saying that you HAVE TO work in this category. Make a choice based on your own values, needs and feelings.

I really don't understand this at all?

Go back to the career counsellor or whoever gave you this book and ask for help.

Need some help? Talk to somebody

You've been working through this book for a while now. You've done a lot of thinking. You've asked yourself some important questions and learned about yourself and some occupational choices. You've come a long way already.

Now may be a good time to talk to somebody. If you need help and live in Alberta, call the Career Information Hotline (see the Resources section). They can answer your questions or direct you to the nearest Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) service centre. If you got this book from a career counsellor, you can make an appointment to talk with that counsellor. Discuss your progress. Look at the occupational category or categories that you have chosen.

After you talk to your counsellor, you will be ready to continue with the next steps in career planning.

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STEP THREE: What are my Best Choices?

So far, you read about Joe and Felee and how they reached points in their lives where they wanted and needed to change. They did two things at first.

- They stopped and looked at their lives.
- They found out about some career options.

Then, Joe and Felee had to decide which career options suited them the best. You have done the same things as Joe and Felee.

In step one, What am I Doing Right Now?, you discovered why you are doing career planning. You learned to stop and look. In step two, What do I Need to Know?, you learned about your skills, interests, values and traits. You also learned about the many types of occupations and selected some occupational categories to further explore.

Now in step three, What are my Best Choices?, you will move another step closer to choosing an occupation. In this step of career planning, you will think and decide. You will find out whether the occupations you are considering will fit your needs. You will take a look at the many choices in your occupational group. You will do some more research and talk to people who work in the areas that interest you. Finally, with some time and effort, you will choose an occupation that you would like to pursue.

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We'll be asking you to research, complete some exercises and talk to people. Don't worry about doing it all in one day. As you get answers to some questions, you'll find that you have more new questions. Making decisions like this takes time. The point is to get the information you need to decide on the career path that works for you.

In order to answer the question for step three, What are my Best Choices?, you'll want to ask yourself some other questions.

- How do I find out more about the occupations that interest me?
- What information do I need?
- Am I still interested?
- Which occupation will I go for?

A Word about Research

To make a good decision, you need lots of information. The process of getting more information is called research. Research is really just a matter of asking questions and getting answers. Why is it so important to ask questions and do research? Think for a minute about what an automotive service technician does. (For one, they used to be called mechanics!) Do they just spend time working on the engine? Or is there more to it than that? Today, most automotive service technicians must know how to use computers and other electronic equipment. Some of that equipment is used to test vehicles. Other electronic equipment is part of the vehicles themselves. Just think of some of the new vehicles you've seen or heard about. Some are even hooked up to satellites! Automotive service technicians today have a lot more to deal with than they did in the past.

This is just one example. But, as you can see, an occupation may have more to it than meets the eye. By doing research, you'll find out all you need to know about an occupation to help you decide.

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How do I find out more about the occupations that interest me?

Who do you talk to? You have to ask the right people or you might not get the most useful answers. When you're researching occupations, the best people to talk to are:

- workers in the occupation
- career counsellors
- representatives of educational institutions that offer training in the occupation

There are a number places you can go to get information about occupations. These include:

1. **Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) service centres**

   These centres are all over Alberta. Call the Career Information Hotline to find out which one is closest to you.

   At these service centres you can find books, pamphlets, and videos to help you make a decision about your career. You will also find detailed profiles on over 500 occupations. The profiles include information on working conditions, duties, skills needed, education requirements and earnings. This material is also at many public libraries, community agencies and schools.

2. **Schools**

   These include public and private colleges, universities, technical institutes and private vocational schools. Many junior and senior high schools also have information about occupational choices.

3. **Community Agencies**

   Many organizations and agencies provide career related information to specific groups of people, such as:
   - youth
   - Aboriginal people
   - women
   - immigrants
   - people with disabilities
   - people over 45
   - people on social assistance
   - people on employment insurance

4. **Professional Associations and Unions**

   These organizations have information on specific occupations, including education and training, and certification requirements. Professional associations and unions can also tell you how many people are working in a particular occupation.

5. **Workers in the occupation**

   It's a good idea to talk to somebody who actually works in the occupation you are interested in. Some ways to do this include:
   - find people you already know who work in the occupation
   - ask your friends, family or neighbours if they know someone
   - ask at a workplace that employs people in the occupation.

6. **Career Information Hotline**

   This is a free telephone service. You can call the Hotline from anywhere in Alberta with your questions. See the Resources section of this book for more information.

7. **Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website**

   You can also get all sorts of information on occupations, career planning, educational programs, and job opportunities at the ALIS website. Go to **www.alis.gov.ab.ca**

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What information do I need?

As you do your research, you need to get answers to some important questions:

What are my occupational choices?

What does a worker in this occupation really do?

What else should I know about this occupation?

Will this occupation meet my needs?

EXERCISE

What are my occupational choices?

In step two, you saw some examples of occupations in each of the seven broad categories. But there are many, many more types of occupations within each group. Ask a career counsellor about other possibilities. You can also go on the Internet and visit the ALIS website. Go to www.alis.gov.ab.ca Click on OCCINFO to find over 500 occupational profiles. As you read through these occupational possibilities, write down the ones that really interest you. Try to come up with four or five for the exercises on the next pages.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Look at your list of occupations (you should have four or five). The next step is to do some research. Maybe you already know quite a bit about some of these occupations. Maybe you only know a little about others. You shouldn't choose one just because you already know about it. And even if you know a lot about an occupation, new technology may have changed things. To make a good career decision, you'll want to find out as much as you can by doing some detailed research. You need to do the same research for each occupation.

Ways to research

You can do three main kinds of research as you look into possible occupations: paper, people and participation.

Paper research involves going to printed sources of information like career development libraries and public libraries. You usually write a lot of things down and read through a variety of resource materials. Paper research is a good first step in researching specific occupations.

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People research is a more personal way to research occupations. It is an important part of career planning and involves talking to people who actually work in the occupations you are interested in. Talking to people is a good way to confirm information you have already collected. You can also get answers to questions that may not be available in printed material.

Participation research takes your research one step further. It involves participating in the occupation you are interested in. Volunteering is a great way to test out an occupation or at least the occupational category. You can also look into the possibility of "job shadowing" as a way to learn more about a particular occupation.

You can do some of your research at the following places.

- Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) service centres
- Schools (including colleges, technical institutes and universities)
- Community agencies
- Career materials
- Career counsellors
- Professional associations and unions
- Career Information Hotline

The Value of Volunteering

Volunteer work can help us move closer to our career goals. Maybe you coach basketball at the youth centre. Or you help look after children in your community. No, you don't get paid. But, you can learn some important skills that may be useful in getting work in the future. Many employers have a space for volunteer activities on their application forms. They consider volunteering to be an important part of a career. For people who have been out of the labour force for a while, volunteering can be a bridge to new work opportunities. Some people have even turned their volunteer "jobs" into paying jobs.

Volunteering can also be a way to explore different occupations. You can't volunteer to be an actual veterinarian. But you can explore occupations in the agriculture industry by volunteering at a zoo. Or you could explore health care occupations by giving your time at a hospital.

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Job Shadowing

Job shadowing is another way to participate in researching an occupation. When you job shadow someone, you observe him or her at work. By spending some time "on the job" you get a better understanding of what the work involves. You can set up job shadowing with workers in the occupations that still interest you after you have done all your research. For more information on job shadowing, call the Career Information Hotline or talk to a career counsellor.

It will take some time to do this research properly. The purpose here is to find the best occupation, not the first one that suits you. You have hundreds of possibilities to choose from. Give yourself time to think about what you are learning.

The following exercise has a worksheet to help you with your research. Make several copies of the worksheet so that you will have a separate page for each occupation. Do one occupation at a time. You will be doing this research on all the occupations from your list, so it doesn't matter which one you start with.

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EXERCISE

What does a person in this occupation really do?

What is this occupation all about? This is a big question. The following questions will help you in your research. You can get answers to these questions by doing paper, and people research, and by finding a way to participate in the occupation. You will find a lot of information at the places we talked about earlier.

Once you have the answers, you'll have a better idea of what the occupations are all about. If you have some of your own questions, add them to the list. Take as much time as you need. Detailed research is hard work. Don't forget to take a break now and then!

Occupation being researched _____

1. What are the main tasks that a person in this occupation does?

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. What other tasks are involved?

   _____

   _____

3. Are there jobs in this occupation right now?

   _____

4. Are these jobs near where I live?

   _____

5. Will there be jobs in this occupation in the future?

   _____

6. Is the work usually full-time? Part-time?

   _____

7. Is the work usually all year around? Seasonal?

   _____

8. Are the hours of work usually regular? Shift work?

   _____

How do you get Information from Workers?

- Always phone first and ask if he or she has time to talk to you.
- Be polite.
- Make it clear that you are not asking for a job – you just want information.
- Ask for a short appointment – about 15 minutes.
- Ask about related occupations.
- Thank the worker for his/her time. Send a thank-you note if you feel comfortable.

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9. What is the workplace like? (Example: lots of people, outdoors in summer, noisy office)

_____

_____

10. Does this work ask for physical strength? (Example: do you lift heavy things?)

_____

11. Do you need special education to do this job? If so, what kind of education?

_____

12. Do you need safety training to do this job? (Examples: First aid, safety orientation)

_____

Where can you get the training?

_____

What will it cost? (Examples: tuition, books, and fees)

_____

How long will it take?

_____

13. Does this work ask for any license or certificate? If so, what?

_____

14. What can a person learn on the job?

_____

_____

15. Are orientation sessions for new workers provided?

_____

16. Does the work ask for social skills? (Example: do you talk to customers?)

_____

_____

17. What are the legal requirements? (Examples: do you have to be bonded? A certain age?)

_____

18. Do you need your own tools? If so, how much do they cost?

_____

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19. Do you need special clothing? If so, who pays for it?

_____

20. Do you need your own vehicle? (Examples: car, truck, bicycle)

_____

21. Is there usually room for movement? Can a person move to a related job after they have some experience?

_____

22. What is the usual starting rate of pay?

_____

23. What is the top rate of pay?

_____

24. What are the usual benefits? (Examples: health care plan, free uniforms, parking)

_____

25. What do people like about this occupation?

_____

_____

26. What do people not like about this occupation?

_____

_____

27. How do people get to be in this occupation?

_____

28. May I contact the worker again if I have more questions about the occupation?

_____

Add your own questions and get answers to them.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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EXERCISE

What else should I know about this occupation?

Even after you have done your paper research and talked to someone working in each occupation (people research), you may still have some questions. Use this space to write down anything else you need to know.

Occupation _____

Questions

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

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EXERCISE

What to do next: narrowing the choices

Before you can narrow down your occupation choices, you need to finish your research for the two questions "What does a worker in this occupation really do?" and "What else do I need to know?". This research should be done for at least four or five occupations.

To help narrow down your choices, answer this question for each occupation that you researched.

Now that I know what is involved in this occupation, am I still interested? Yes No

If you answer "yes":

Write the name of that occupation in the short list below. Try to have at least three occupations that you can look at more closely.

Short List of Occupations that I am Interested in

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

If you answer "no":

Go back to your exercise, What Occupations am I Interested in?, and add a short note about why you're not interested. Draw a line through this occupation. It is off your list. Don't feel bad. It's good to know what you don't want to do, and why you don't want to do it.

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Personal needs

All people have needs. For some people, doing something worthwhile is more important than making lots of money. For others, personal enjoyment is their strongest need.

Needs often change as people grow. When your family is young and depends on you for food, clothing and shelter, you might need a job that pays well. You may need work with lots of stability. After your kids have left home, your needs might shift toward personal enjoyment or opportunities to try something different.

Needs are often similar to values. But they include other things as well, such as:

- I need to be home with my kids after school.
- I need to stay in my community near my family.

Each of us must balance our personal desires and our responsibilities as well as we can. But we will still see some needs as stronger than others.

When you are choosing an occupation, pay attention to your needs. For example, your skills and interests may fit into the "manual or practical workers" occupational group. But you have a strong personal need to help people. Maybe you can put your occupational group and your need together. For example, you could drive a bus for people with disabilities.

Sherry had wanted to change her career path so her children would have a better future. She was tired of working in low paying jobs that seemed to go nowhere. But she hadn't finished high school.

She really wanted to try something new and start on a fresh path. But there were so many occupations out there. She didn't know where to start. A big concern was that she was a single parent and her kids were still so young. What kind of occupation could she go for and still give her kids the attention they needed? Sherry also needed an occupation that would not need a lot of training. Sherry met with a career counsellor. They spent a lot of time talking about what Sherry needed in an occupation. Once she decided her priorities, it helped narrow down the choices. Sherry got a little bit closer to making a decision.

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EXERCISE

Your needs

What needs are most important to you right now? Write down your strongest needs.

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EXERCISE

Will this occupation meet my needs?

This list of questions is about personal needs. Write down the name of the occupation you are researching and answer the questions about that occupation. Then look at your list of personal needs. You may have more questions. Add your questions to the end and answer them.

Make several copies of this worksheet so you can write down the answers for each occupation you are researching.

Occupation being researched _____

1. Will I make enough money doing this work? _____
2. Will I be happy doing this work? _____
3. Will I be learning and growing if I do this work? _____
4. Do I feel that this work is worthwhile? _____
5. Will this work affect my home life? _____
6. Will this work put stress on my family? Can we handle the stress? _____ _____
7. Will this work affect my relationship with my friends or family? _____
8. Will I have to move in order to do this work? Am I able to move? _____
9. Will I have time for my hobbies and other interests if I do this work? _____

Add your questions here.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

	Yes	Maybe	No
Does this occupation match most of my personal needs?	☐	☐	☐
Do I want this occupation?	☐	☐	☐

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Am I still interested?

You have finished the detailed research on each of the occupations you have been studying. It is now time to stop and summarize what you know so far. You should still be considering more than one occupation.

Make a list of all the good and not so good things about each occupation you have been researching. Along with the other information you have collected, this summary will help you decide what occupation may be a good choice for you.

EXERCISE

Summarizing what I know

Make several copies of this worksheet so you can write down the answers for each occupation you are still researching.

Occupation _____

Good	Not So Good
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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Which occupation will I go for?

You have researched some choices. You've talked to a career counsellor. You've talked to people who work in the occupations that interest you. You've been collecting information and getting answers to important questions. You thought about what is good and not so good about the occupations you are still considering. You've taken many steps toward actually choosing an occupation. Now, you're ready to make a decision.

Write down the name of your final occupational choice here:

My chosen occupation

_____

Congratulations! You've worked hard to get this far. You've been taking actions that will enable to move in a new career direction. Now it's time to firm up your decision and make a plan that will turn your decision into reality.

Confused? Don't worry if you haven't chosen an occupation. Talk to your career counsellor.

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STEP FOUR: What do I Need to Do Now?

You have stopped and looked at your life. You have discovered many things about yourself and the world of work. You have thought about your career choices and you made a decision.

My Chosen Occupation
(write down your choice from the last section)

_____

Now, it's time to do some planning on how to reach your goal. Then, you can begin to act on your plan.

You've already taken lots of steps toward your career goals. Now is the time to set the final action steps into motion.

In order to answer the question for step four, you'll also want to ask yourself some other questions.

- Do I meet the requirements of my chosen occupation?
- Where do I stand now?

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Do I meet the requirements of my chosen occupation?

Workers in most occupations need to meet four types of requirements. These are:

- educational requirements
- training requirements
- special requirements
- specific job requirements

Find out the requirements for your chosen occupation. Then you will be ready to plan your next actions.

My Chosen Occupation Is

_____

1. **Educational Requirements**
   For most occupations, you need a minimum level of education or schooling. Some require a university, college or other post-secondary education. For others, it may be Grade 12 or Grade 10.

What education level does my chosen occupation require?

_____

_____

2. **Training Requirements**
   For many occupations, you have to take special training or courses even after you meet the educational requirement. This is true even if you go to university. Other examples include the many trades that are available through apprenticeship programs. In order to be qualified to work, tradespeople must take a combination of classroom and on-the-job training. Some companies or businesses offer their own training, such as training for salespeople.

Does my chosen occupation require any special training? Yes No

If yes, what is the special training called?

_____

_____

Where do I take it?

_____

_____

Sherry did a lot of research into occupations. She worked closely with her career counsellor. They looked at occupational profiles and learned about occupational requirements. Finally, Sherry decided to pursue a career in retail sales. She had always had a knack for selling things, had an eye for fashion and was good with people.

She knew she would have to finish high school first. And once she got working, she would have to start at the beginning. But, Sherry talked to some employers and learned that there are great opportunities for people who are willing to work hard and learn. Some of the companies offered training programs. Sherry also found out that the mall near her home usually had openings in retail. The great advantage was that the mall had a day care centre. That would help her do two important things: pursue her occupation and look after her family's needs.

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3. Special Requirements

Even if you have met the general education and training requirements, some occupations may require even more from you. Some occupations require you to have your own tools. Others require you to own a car. Some require a special talent or physical ability. Artists, musicians and actors all require special talents. Many occupations expect you to pass a physical fitness test, and complete a safety training session.

Does the occupation that I chose require anything special? Yes No

If yes, what does it require?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Assessing special occupational requirements

List the special requirements of your chosen occupation so you can plan how you're going to meet those requirements. Use the following example as a guideline.

Occupation	Special Requirement (Example: Car, talent, physical ability)	I Have	I Don't Have	How I Can Get or Develop	Date completed Done ✔

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4. Specific Job Requirements

Employers in some occupations may need workers who can meet specific job requirements. Perhaps their employees must be willing to travel, to work shifts, to be "on call" at times, to wear uniforms, or use safety equipment.

You, too, may have specific work needs. You may, for example, need work that leaves you free in the evenings, work that you can get to by bus, or work that pays you well enough to provide for your family. Look back at the exercises about your needs.

Does the occupation I chose have specific job requirements? Yes No

If yes, what are the requirements?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Assessing specific job requirements

List the specific job requirements of your occupation so you can plan how you're going to meet those requirements. Use the following example as a guideline.

Occupation	Special Job Requirement (Example: Shift work, being on call)	I Can Meet	I Can't Meet	How I Can Manage This	Found solution Done ✔

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Where do I stand now?

1. Do I meet the educational requirements for the occupation that I have chosen?
   Yes No

   If No, see the book *Education and Training Planner.* See Resources at the end of this book for information on how to get a copy. If Yes, move to the next question.

2. Do I meet the training requirements for my occupation? Yes No

   If No, see the book *Education and Training Planner.* See Resources at the end of this book for information on how to get a copy. If Yes, move to the next question.

3. Can I meet the special requirements for my occupation? Yes No

   If No, see a career counsellor at your nearest AHRE service centre. If Yes, move to the next question.

4. Can I meet the specific job requirements for my occupation? Yes No

   If No, see a career counsellor at your nearest AHRE service centre. If Yes, see a career counsellor or read books like the *Job Seeker's Handbook* to help you get started on your job search. See Resources at the end of this book for information on how to get a copy.

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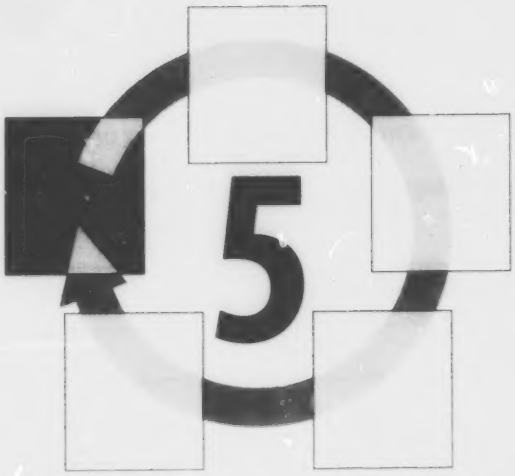
STEP FIVE: What Actions will I Take?



In order to answer the question for Step five, you'll also want to ask yourself another question.

- How do I set up an action plan?

How do I set up an action plan?

You've been taking action for each step of your career planning. You've done research, you've discussed your plans with a counsellor, and you've talked to people who work in a variety of occupations. Now, it's time to set up an action plan for the final steps.

An action plan is a way of recording what you need to do to reach your goal. It is also a way of keeping yourself on track. Joe planned to make a big career change. He made an action plan to go back to school so he could work with computers.

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Here is part of Joe's action plan. This is just a sampling of what he did. Joe took many other actions as he moved toward a new career.

Joe's Action	Date	Done ✔
Make an appointment to see counsellor	February 17	✔
Attend career planning workshop	March 2	✔
Do self-assessment exercise	March 4	✔
Contact colleges and schools to see what programs are available	March 16	✔

Now it's your turn! On the next page, we have provided space for you to write down your own action plan. Think of what things you must do to reach your goal. Make a list. Here are some of the things you should consider:

- Do you need to meet with a career counsellor?
- Do you have to get more information?
- Do you need to find out which schools offer the training you want?
- Do you have to discuss things with your family?
- Do you have to leave your current job?
- Do you need to look over your finances?

Write down every task that you must do, even if it seems minor. Give yourself a deadline for each item and check it off once it's done. If you change your plan, write down the changes.

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EXERCISE

Action plan

Action	Date	Done ✔

Stick with your plan: Dealing with problems

You've done a lot of work to decide on an occupation. However, when you least expect them, problems might make it hard for you to reach your goal.

Possible problems include:

- your child gets sick
- your car breaks down or the bus route changes
- you have money problems.

Ways to get around problems are called solutions. For each problem, there is usually more than one possible solution. Here's an example of two possible solutions for one of the problems we just mentioned. Can you think of a third solution for the problem? Write it on the third line.

Problem

You have an appointment to meet your counsellor but your child gets sick.

Solution

1. You can phone the counsellor and make another appointment.
2. You ask a friend to babysit your child.
3. _____

_____

What were some of your problems in the past? What solutions helped you overcome each one? Write them down here.

Past Problems

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Past Solutions

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Plan ahead

Don't let problems keep you from reaching your occupational goal. For each action in your plan, write down any possible problems. Then, think about how you're going to get around the problems. Write down your possible solutions. For every problem that you list, there should be at least one solution.

Try to be as specific as you can. The more precisely you can describe the problem, the easier it will be to find a solution. By planning your solutions in advance, you'll find it much easier to solve problems if they do come up. This will help you to keep working on your occupational goal.

My Action Plan

(If you need more space, make extra copies.)

Action	Potential Problems	Potential Solutions

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Remember the five steps

You've just used the five steps of decision making to help you look at some options and choose an occupation. Once you finish your action plan and really get going, you will be well on your way toward creating a new career direction.

As you go through life, you will need to make many other important decisions. Use the five steps of decision making to help you look at your options and make a decision.

Career Planning is part of Lifelong Learning

We keep learning as long as we are alive. As children, we learned how to walk and talk. We learned to tie our shoes. As adults, we learned how to prepare food or drive a car. We learned to do the work we are now be doing.

There are many reasons to learn. As we look at pursuing a new occupation, we will have to learn new skills. We may have to learn how to work differently. It's all part of lifelong learning.

Even if we aren't actively planning our careers, we are still learning. We are still making decisions and having experiences that enrich and enhance who we are.

What am I doing right now?

When something happens and changes your life in some way, try to stop and think. Step back a bit and look at your situation.

What do I need to know?

Find out about the options that are open to you. Think about your needs, your wants and your abilities.

What are my best choices?

Go over each possibility and think about it. Choose the option that is best for you.

What do I need to do?

Plan how you will carry out your decision.

What action will I take?

Make up your mind, then do it.

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Resources

If you live in Alberta, check out the resources listed here. We already talked about many of these resources in other parts of the book. Here, we tell you how to get the information.

Career Information Hotline

Call the Hotline for answers to your questions about

- Career planning
- Occupations
- Ways to find jobs or work
- Education options
- Information and referrals
- Links to services in your community

Phone
1-800-661-3753 toll-free in Alberta
780-422-4266 in Edmonton

Hearing impaired access
1-800-232-7215 for message relay service
780-422-5283 for TDD service

Hours
8:15 am to 7:00 pm Monday to Thursday
8:15 am to 4:30 pm Friday

E-mail **info@alis.gov.ab.ca**

Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE)

There are AHRE service centres all over Alberta. They have all sorts of information and resources on occupations, career and education options, and job search. You can also talk to a career counsellor at these centres. These services may be offered by other agencies in your community. Call the Career Information Hotline for the office closest to you.

Libraries and Bookstores

Before you finalize your career plans, gather all the information you can. Ask other people what books have helped them. Learn more about the library system. If you can't find what you're looking for, ask for help. Librarians are used to helping people find what they need. They can also help you use the Internet.

Youth Connections

Youth Connections is a career and employment service for people between the ages of 16 and 24. There are offices in communities across Alberta. For the office nearest you, contact the Career Information Hotline. You can also check out the Youth Connections web link at **www.youthconnections.gov.ab.ca**

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Websites

If you know how to use the Internet, there are lots of websites with information on career development topics. If you can't use the Internet at home, go to your local Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) service centre. You can also use the public library or employment agency.

Here are some helpful websites.

www.alis.gov.ab.ca
This address will get you to information about careers, learning and employment.

www.alis.gov.ab.ca/occinfo
This address will get you to a site called OCCINFO where you can get information on over 500 occupations. You can also get connected to information about who gives training for occupations.

www.alis.gov.ab.ca/edinfo
This address will get you to a site called EDINFO. It has information on education and training programs in Alberta.

www.alis.gov.ab.ca/studentsfinance
This address will get you to a series of *Study Your Options* booklets. They have information on financing your post-secondary education.

www.tradesecrets.org
This address will get you to information about apprenticeship in Alberta.

Books

We talked about several books in this planner. Here is a list of books and planners that you can order by calling the Career Information Hotline. (See Career Information Hotline earlier in this section for a complete list of phone numbers.) You can also order these books through the Internet. Go to **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop** for more information.

If you live in Alberta, these books are free. Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) publishes them all.

Adult Back to School Planner
This book helps you answer lots of questions about going back to school as an adult. It discusses topics such as childcare and studying and suggests ways to cope with typical concerns of adult students.

Change and Transitions
This is a workbook for people who are experiencing change. It combines information, exercises, practical tips and strategies to help make the most of change.

Education and Training Planner
This book will help the reader who already has a goal in mind. It talks about the education and training programs in Alberta and how to get more information. It provides sample questions to ask counsellors and discusses budgeting and financial planning.

Finding Out: How to Get the Information You Need to Make the Choices You Want
This book shows you how to do research and get information that will help you make career decisions.

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The Investigator

This booklet lists phone numbers for places you can go to for information on career planning, education and searching for work.

It's About Time... To Choose A Post-secondary Education Program

This book has lots of information on education programs at Alberta colleges, technical institutes and universities.

Job Seeker's Handbook

This introductory guide gives step-by-step information on how to find work opportunities. It is written for people who do not have much work experience.

Money 101: Budgeting Basics for Further Education

This book talks about financing your education. It covers setting personal goals, figuring out how much your education will cost, suggestions on how to pay for it, student loans and budgeting.

Volunteering: How To Build Your Career By Helping Others

This book describes the many benefits of volunteering as a way to build your career.

Workability Handbook

This workbook lists 32 skills and attitudes that a person needs to find and keep work. It also has space to write down which of these skills and attitudes you have used in the past and which ones you want to learn.

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We'd Like to Hear From You ...

Career Planner

Date _____

Did you find the information in this publication useful?
In what way?

_____

_____

_____

How could we improve it?

_____

_____

_____

Do you have any suggestions for other products that would be of value to you?

_____

_____

_____

Would You Like to Receive a Catalogue of Our Products?

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

_____ Postal Code _____

Phone _____ FAX _____

Please Return this Form to

Career and Workplace Resources
Alberta Human Resources and Employment
6th Floor, 9940 - 106 Street, Edmonton, AB T5K 2V1
Fax 780-422-5319

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